Mary, Mother of Life

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her that she would conceive and bear a son, Mary responded with her fiat, "May it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). Mary conceives Christ in her womb, becoming the mother of God, the mother of Jesus. Jesus himself tells us that he is "the way and the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6). In becoming the mother of Jesus, Mary becomes the *mother of life*. Mary's acceptance in this unforeseen moment demonstrates how each of us must welcome the gift of new human life, even when that gift is unexpected or calls us to make sacrifices.

Eve was called the "mother of all the living" (Gen 3:20). Unfortunately, her disobedience brought sin into the world. In contrast Mary, through her obedience to God, gives birth to our Salvation. Mary becomes the New Eve—the new mother of all the living. Her fiat gives us an example of perfect docility and cooperation with the will of God.

At the Annunciation, when Mary learns that her elderly cousin Elizabeth is six months pregnant, she travels in haste to visit Elizabeth, spending the next three months at her side, even while pregnant herself. In her selfless service to Elizabeth, the Blessed Mother perfectly models how we are called to accompany expectant mothers as they prepare to welcome new life into the world.

Mary's role as the Mother of Life extends from the Annunciation all the way to the Crucifixion. On

Oh Mary, "Mother of the living, to you do we entrust the cause of life."

Evangelium vitae

Calvary, Mary stands at the foot of the Cross with Saint John. The Gospel tells us: "When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home" (Jn 19:26-27).

With his final breaths on the Cross, Jesus entrusts Mary and the Beloved Disciple to one another, and by extension establishes a maternal relationship between Mary and the Church. Jesus' words are addressed not only to Saint John, but to each one of us. In this moment, the physical mother of Jesus becomes the spiritual mother of the Church and all the faithful. Saint John goes on to take Mary into his home and cares for her as she advances in age, demonstrating our responsibility to continue our care for human life, from conception to natural death. Mary, who taught us how to nurture human life, becomes the recipient of that same honor and care.

The life of the Blessed Mother teaches us to respect each human life in every stage and circumstance. Mary is our model for upholding the sanctity of all human life. O Mary, "Mother of the living, to you do we entrust the cause of life."[1]

[1] Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 105.

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